



May 20, 2005

## **Joseph Bevilacqua pleads guilty to perjury, criminal contempt in the dissemination of a surveillance tape and subsequent denial**

Attorney **Joseph A. Bevilacqua** pleaded guilty today to perjury and criminal contempt of court for disseminating a surveillance tape in violation of a court order and then denying under oath that he had done so.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the guilty plea, which Bevilacqua entered before U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi in U.S. District Court, Providence. Bevilacqua pleaded guilty to a two-count information that the government filed on May 2.

At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth P. Madden said that, in February 2002, Bevilacqua falsely denied under oath that he had leaked to WJAR-TV reporter Jim Taricani a surveillance tape from the Plunder Dome public corruption investigation. By letting Taricani have the tape, Bevilacqua also committed criminal contempt of court by violating a Court order limiting distribution of the tapes.

In August 2000, Senior U.S. District Court Judge Ronald R. Lagueux issued an order prohibiting dissemination of surveillance tapes in the Plunder Dome investigation to anyone not directly involved in the criminal cases stemming from the tapes.

After WJAR-TV broadcast one of the tapes in February 2001, Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres appointed a special prosecutor to determine who had violated Judge

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Lagueux's order. The special prosecutor, Marc DeSisto, took sworn depositions from individuals, including Bevilacqua, who had legitimate access to the tapes. Bevilacqua denied under oath that he had been the source of the tape.

After Taricani repeatedly refused to disclose his source for the tape, Judge Torres sentenced him in December 2004 to home confinement for criminal contempt. Testifying during the sentencing hearing, Bevilacqua conceded he had let Taricani have that tape and others, and admitted, in sworn depositions taken by special prosecutor DeSisto, that he had falsely denied being the source.

Following Taricani's sentencing, Judge Torres referred the matter of Bevilacqua's conduct to the U.S. Attorney's Office.

The maximum penalty for perjury is five years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. There is no specified penalty for criminal contempt of court. Bevilacqua, 55, of 50 Deep Meadow Lane, East Greenwich, is free on unsecured bond, pending sentencing, which is scheduled for August 18.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation investigated the Bevilacqua matter. First Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth P. Madden is prosecuting the case.

Operation Plunder dome was a public corruption investigation into the administration of Providence Mayor Vincent A. Cianci. It led to convictions of nine defendants, including Cianci, on various corruption charges.